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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are not rendered obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. **If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues, or believes that some or all of the claims are not in condition for allowance, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned to schedule a telephone Examiner Interview before any further actions on the merits.**

The applicants will now address each of the issues raised in the outstanding Office Action.

Allowable Subject Matter-Objections

Claims 15-18, 29 and 30 are objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of canceled base claim 1 and canceled intervening claims 3 and 11. Each of claims 16-18 depends, either directly or indirectly, from rewritten claim 15. Thus, claims 15-18 are in condition for allowance.

Each of claims 29 and 30 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of canceled base claim 27. Thus, claims 29 and 30 are in condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5, 8-14, 19, 20, 27, 28, 39-42 and 44-48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,147,955 ("the Dobbins

patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,640,251 (“the Wiget patent”). The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this ground of rejection in view of the following.

First, since claims 1, 3, 11, 27, 39-42 and 48 have been canceled, this ground of rejection is rendered moot with respect to these claims.

Second, each of claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, 12-14, 19, 20 and 44-47, as amended, depends, either directly or indirectly, from claim 15. As discussed above, claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of canceled base claim 1 and canceled intervening claims 3 and 11, and is therefore in condition for allowance. Consequently, each of claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, 12-14, 19, 20 and 44-47 is also in condition for allowance.

Finally, claim 28, as amended, depends from claim 30. As discussed above, claim 30 has been rewritten in independent form to include the elements of canceled base claim 27, and is therefore in condition for allowance. Consequently, claim 28 is also in condition for allowance.

Claims 21, 25, 26, 31, 32 and 35-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Wiget patent in view of RFC 2685 (“the Fox RFC”). The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this ground of rejection in view of the following.

Since each of these claims has been canceled, this ground of rejection is rendered moot.

Claims 6 and 7 were not specifically addressed in this Office Action, but were rejected in the previous Office Action. Since, however, each of these claims depends from claim 5 (which is in condition for allowance for at least the reason discussed above), claims 6 and 7 are also in condition for allowance.

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Entry of Amendments

Since the foregoing amendments place this application into condition for allowance and raise no new issues (namely, claims are canceled, "objected to" claims are rewritten in independent form, and claim dependencies are corrected), this amendment should be entered.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the applicants request that the Examiner pass this application to issue.

Any arguments made in this amendment pertain *only* to the specific aspects of the invention *claimed*. Any claim amendments or cancellations, and any arguments, are made *without prejudice to, or disclaimer of*, the applicants' right to seek patent protection of any unclaimed (e.g., narrower, broader, different) subject matter, such as by way of a continuation or divisional patent application for example.

Respectfully submitted,

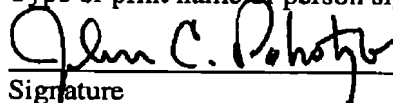
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John C. Pokotylo, Attorney
Reg. No. 36,242
Tel.: (732) 542-9070CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

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